

Basic Dynamic Markings

• <i>ppp</i>	<i>pianississimo</i>	"very, very soft"
• <i>pp</i>	<i>pianissimo</i>	"very soft"
• <i>p</i>	<i>piano</i>	"soft"
• <i>mp</i>	<i>mezzo-piano</i>	"moderately soft"
• <i>mf</i>	<i>mezzo-forte</i>	"moderately loud"
• <i>f</i>	<i>forte</i>	"loud"
• <i>ff</i>	<i>fortissimo</i>	"very loud"
• <i>fff</i>	<i>fortississimo</i>	"very, very loud"
• <i>sfz</i>	<i>sforzando</i>	"fierce accent"
• <i><</i>	<i>crescendo</i>	"becoming louder"
• <i>></i>	<i>diminuendo</i>	"becoming softer"

Basic Anticipation Markings



Staccato

This indicates the musician should *play the note shorter than notated*, usually half the value, the rest of the metric value is then silent. Staccato marks may appear on notes of any value, shortening their performed duration without speeding the music itself.



Spiccato

Indicates a *longer silence after the note* (as described above), making the note very short. Usually applied to quarter notes or shorter. (In the past, this marking's meaning was more ambiguous: it sometimes was used interchangeably with staccato, and sometimes indicated an accent and not staccato. These usages are now almost defunct, but still appear in some scores.) In string instruments this indicates a bowing technique in which the bow bounces lightly upon the string.



Accent

Play the note louder, or with a harder attack than surrounding unaccented notes. May appear on notes of any duration.



Tenuto

This symbol indicates *play the note at its full value, or slightly longer*. It can also indicate a slight dynamic emphasis or be combined with a staccato dot to indicate a slight detachment.



Marcato

Play the note somewhat louder or more forcefully than a note with a regular accent mark (open horizontal wedge). In organ notation, this means *play a pedal note with the toe*. Above the note, use the right foot; below the note, use the left foot.

Basic Dynamic Markings



Trill

A rapid alternation between the specified note and the next higher note (according to key signature) within its duration. When followed by a wavy horizontal line, this symbol indicates an extended, or running, trill. Trills can begin on either the specified root note or the upper auxiliary note though the latter is more prevalent in modern performance.



Upper Mordent

Rapidly play the principal note, the next higher note (according to key signature) then return to the principal note for the remaining duration. In most music, the mordent begins on the auxiliary note, and the alternation between the two notes may be extended.



Lower Mordent (inverted)

Rapidly play the principal note, the note below it, then return to the principal note for the remaining duration. In much music, the mordent begins on the auxiliary note, and the alternation between the two notes may be extended.



Turn

When placed directly above the note, the turn indicates a sequence of upper auxiliary note, principal note, lower auxiliary note, and a return to the principal note. When placed to the right of the note, the principal note is played first, followed by the above pattern. Placing a vertical line through the turn symbol or inverting it, it indicates an *inverted turn*, in which the order of the auxiliary notes is reversed.



Appoggiatura

The first half of the principal note's duration has the pitch of the grace note (the first two-thirds if the principal note is a dotted note).



Acciaccatura

The acciaccatura is of very brief duration, as though brushed on the way to the principal note, which receives virtually all of its notated duration.

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| • al niente: | >n | to nothing; fade to silence |
| • calando: | | simultaneous reduction of volume and tempo |
| • calmando: | | becoming calmer |
| • dal niente: | | from nothing; out of silence |
| • fortepiano: | fp | loud and then immediately soft |
| • fortissimo piano: | ffp | very loud and then immediately soft |
| • in rilievo: | | a particular instrument or part is to play louder |
| • perdendo or perdendosi: | | losing volume, fading into nothing, dying away |
| • marcato: | | stressed, pronounced |
| • mezzoforte piano: | mfp | moderately strong and then immediately soft |
| • molto | | much |
| • morendo: | | dying away (may also indicate a tempo change) |
| • smorzando: | smorz | becoming muffled or toned down |